

PART 1

DIAGNOSIS

Part 1 of this book describes in considerable detail the human processes in organizations, in order to bring out the kinds of things the process consultant focuses on when he attempts to understand what is going on in the organization. In Part 2 we will shift the focus of analysis away from diagnosis toward the kinds of intervention which the process consultant makes. Without an understanding of the *diagnostic* process, however, these interventions will not make sense. Therefore, the reader who is not familiar with interpersonal and group theory should first read Part 1. On the other hand, the reader who is familiar with concepts of communication, group process, leadership, and the like, can skip immediately to Part 2.

**PROCESS CONSULTATION: ITS ROLE
IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT**

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FOREWORD

The purpose of this common foreword to all the volumes of the Addison-Wesley Series on Organization Development is twofold: (1) to give the reader some idea as to the origin and purpose of the series; and (2) to guide the reader through the content of the different books.

The series came to be because we felt there was a growing theory and practice of something called "organization development," but most students, colleagues, and managers knew relatively little about it. Many of us are highly active as O.D. consultants, but little has been written about what we do when we are with a client or what our underlying theory of consultation is. We were also acutely aware of the fact that, though there are common assumptions shared by most practitioners of O.D., there are great individual variations in the strategies and tactics employed by different consultants. The field is still emerging and new methods are constantly being invented. It seemed appropriate, therefore, not to try to write a single text, but to give several of the foremost theorist-practitioners a chance to explain their own view of O.D. and their own style of working with client systems.

The authors of this series of six books represent a variety of points of view, but they do not exhaust the major approaches currently in use in O.D. There are some obvious names missing—Argyris, Tannenbaum, Ferguson, Bradford, Davis, Burke—to name just a few. We hope in future volumes of the series to get these men and others to write about their theory and practice.

The six books of this series can be described as follows: Bennis presents a very broad survey of the history and present practice of O.D. How and why did it come about, what is it, and what are some of the major unresolved issues in O.D.? The Beckhard volume is a systematic attempt to describe the various strategies and tactics employed in different kinds of O.D. efforts. Beckhard goes beyond his own approach and tries to build a general framework within which most O.D. programs can be located. The Beckhard and Bennis volumes together give the reader an excellent overview of the field.

The two volumes by Blake and Mouton and by Lawrence and Lorsch are somewhat more personalized statements of their particular views of how organizations function, how organizational excellence is to be judged, and how an O.D. effort can contribute to the achievement of such excellence. Both books focus on total organization systems and attempt to show how intervention in organizations leads to constructive change and development.

The volumes by Walton and Schein are written at a more specific level. They highlight some of the day-to-day activities of the consultant as he works with a client system in the context of an O.D. program. Both deal with the process of the consultation itself. In the Walton book the focus is on the process by which the consultant uses himself to aid in the resolution of conflict. In the Schein book the idea of "process consultation" is introduced and explained in detail. The kinds of organizational processes which are described in these last two volumes lie at the heart of O.D. efforts, but the focus of the books is on the moment-to-moment behavior of the consultant rather than the overall design of the O.D. program.

The six books were written independently with only broad guidelines and minimum coordination by the editors. It was our hope and intention to get six very personal and unique statements, rather than a closely integrated set of "chapters." We feel the amount of overlap is minimal, and that the books in fact complement each other very well in being written at different levels of generality. We hope that the reader will sense that the field of O.D. is converging toward common theories and practices, but that we are a long way from being able to produce a definitive "text" on the subject.

March 1969.

Edgar H. Schein
Richard Beckhard
Warren G. Bennis

PREFACE

This short book on Process Consultation had, in retrospect, a long history. I think it all began in the late 1950's when I became exposed to Doug McGregor. I knew that Doug was an active and successful consultant, and I learned that Doug wanted his colleagues to share in the excitement which the consultation process brought with it. In his lectures he often spoke of experiences with companies, and, whenever possible, he created opportunities for me and others to learn the art of influencing organizations through some direct intervention.

I remember clearly a frustration I had in listening to Doug. He could communicate the excitement of consultation, but he could never quite articulate just what he personally did when he operated as a consultant. I always felt that the inability to write about such actions in a concrete manner was unfortunate in that it deprived others of important insights. I think I resolved at that time to write about my own consultation experiences, if and when I could.

For the next five to ten years I was unable to act on my resolution. What brought me back to life was a sharp goad from Charles Savage who was visiting the Sloan School in 1967-68. He demanded to know in a friendly but firm way why I was "wasting my time teaching a few managers a little psychology when I could be writing up research results which would influence thousands?" This question so upset me that I went home and promptly wrote a ten-page paper on what my consultation experiences really were, why I did not think that I was just "teaching a

little psychology to a few managers," and how research and theory interlocked with consultation. This book is essentially an elaboration of that ten-page paper, and I will forever be grateful to Charlie Savage for providing the impetus to get it out of my system.

My intentions are twofold: (1) to present the reader with those ideas from social psychology which I have found most useful in my consultation experiences; and (2) to give a personal and detailed statement of what I do when I consult. I am not trying to build a new theory or to document a position with research findings. My goals are more personal, and I suspect the reader will find his own evidence that, like any human being, I lack self-insight in certain crucial areas. If such lack of insight has led me into inconsistencies or fallacies in logic, I beg the reader's indulgence. Perhaps this book will lead others to point out these flaws and to expose their own theories and practice, thus moving the whole enterprise of consultation and organization development a step forward.

I am most grateful to my various clients for the challenge, excitement, and fun they have provided me by letting me help them with their various organizational and interpersonal dilemmas. To preserve their privacy I cannot name them individually, but I thank them collectively. The examples I present in my text are deliberately chosen to be a *mixture* of experiences drawn from various private and public organizations. The anonymity of each client is thus preserved, but I have reported the essence of the experiences as faithfully as I am able.

I am also grateful to my colleagues from whom I have learned much about the art of consultation—particularly Richard Beckhard, Warren Bennis, and Chris Argyris. The field of consultation requires constant innovation, and these men have been a never-ending source of new ideas and new practices.

My wife deserves thanks, as usual, for providing the supportive home climate which made it possible to think and write. Finally, I would like to thank my secretary, Linda Whitehead, for her efforts in typing, organizing, and generally supervising the difficult chore of producing, the final manuscript.

Cambridge, Mass.
January 1969

Edgar H. Schein

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